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TWO MONTHS IN BURMAH.

BY FRANK VINCENT, JR.

It would seem a difficult task at the present day to find any spot on this globe which the curiosity of man has not explored. Chief Justice Daly, of New York, in his interesting account of the geographical work of the world for 1873, recognizes this fact, but is compelled to acknowledge that one-seventeenth of the earth's surface yet remains unexplored. In addition to this, there are other portions of the globe of far greater interest to us than the unexplored regions, but concerning which we know virtually nothing.

Among Asiatic countries there are probably none where civilization abounds of which we are so ill informed as of those which lie between the Bay of Bengal and the China sea, and which unitedly constitute Farther India or Indo-China. Possessing an area of 1,000,000 square miles, immense mineral wealth, a wonderfully productive soil, and 25,000,000 inhabitants, yet our knowledge of this territory might have been summed up in the words "Siamese Twins" and "Cochin-China chanticleers," so absolute has been the seclusion and conservatism by which the inhabitants have separated themselves from the rest of the world.

I can speak to you now only of Burmah, where my opportunities for collecting information, both by careful observation and deliberate research were unusually good. I not only enjoyed the honor of being presented to the king, but visited all places of interest with suitable credentials, and was permitted considerable insight into the domestic customs, the religion, literature, laws and character of the people, mixing freely with both high and low. And though my theme possesses much of traditional picturesqueness and romance, I think that an idea of the history, present condition, capabilities and prospects of this remote and wonderful land may be best conveyed to you through a narrative of facts and events, rather than of fancies or philosophies.

On the latest and best of our atlases Farther India comprehends six independent countries or territories: Burmah, Laos, Siam, Cambodia, Cochin-China and Annam. Burmah, occupying more than

one-fourth of the great peninsula, is the most westerly of these provinces, being situated next to the Bay of Bengal and the Bengal presidency of Hither India. It is a state perhaps 1,200 miles in length and 600 in width, or as large as New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky together. The northern portion is somewhat hilly, while along the valley of the Irrawaddy, which traverses the country from north to south, lie rich alluvial plains, which are especially fertile in the vicinity of the deltas on the southern coast.

Two seasons—the wet and the dry—nearly divide the year between them. The south-west monsoon blows from May to October, and the north-east during the remaining months. The difference in temperature between the northern and southern parts of the country is great. North of the capital, which is centrally located, it seldom reaches 60° Fahrenheit, while in the south the mercury, in the hot season, often reaches 120° in the shade. Although this may seem hot enough for any place in *this* world, there are other parts of Southern Asia still hotter. Notable among them is Ghuznee, where the heat is so intense as to be matter of remark even among the salamandrine natives, for it is a common query with them “Mighty Allah! why hast Thou made hell when there is Ghuznee?”

The early history of Burmah, like all early history, is obscure. Prome, one of the principal cities, is said to have been founded 400 years before Christ. Paghan subsequently became the capital, and remained so for twelve centuries. But historic records are very meager until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese made settlements. Then came English and Dutch colonists, who were unsuccessful and were subsequently banished. Wars between the Burmese and their neighbors ensued. In these conflicts England and France became involved. The latest war between Great Britain and Burmah terminated in 1853 (the year of the accession of the present king), by the annexation of the rich province of Pegu to the already enormously extended British empire in the east.

It is now generally believed that the ancestors of the Burmese, and indeed of all the various races and nations of Indo-China, migrated at a remote period from the plateaus of Central Asia—say Thibet or Mongolia. The northern portion of Burmah is inhabited even now by a few Tartar tribes—perhaps descendants of one of the marauding troops of Genghis Khan. Ethnologically speaking,

though probably a distinct race, the Burmese bear more resemblance to the Turanian than to the Aryan families. They have the physiognomy and physique of the Mongols—the small oblique eyes, high and prominent cheek bones, straight black hair, flat, short and broad nose, short and stout body, and yellowish-brown skin. As compared with the Hindoos, they are more robust, but less active; as compared with the Chinese, they are more comely, though of darker complexion. Their language resembles the Chinese in being monosyllabic, but it contains also many elements of the Sanskrit; while their religion is that of Ceylon and Thibet. The entire population of Burmah is now estimated at 5,000,000.

I found the Burmese a simple-minded, indolent people, frank and courteous, fond of amusement, delighting in gay-colored apparel, friendly among themselves, and hospitable to strangers. Instead of entertaining the numerous ambitions of an American, the Burmese set modest limits to their desires, and when these are reached give themselves to repose and enjoyment. They thoroughly appreciate a quiet life, smoking, gossiping and sleeping throughout the day, while half the night is spent in singing and listening to wild music. They do not wear themselves out in endeavoring to equal or surpass their neighbors in dress, food, furniture or house, but easily attain the customary standard, beyond which they do not care to go. The Burmese commandments are: I. Thou shalt not kill any living creature. II. Thou shalt not steal. III. Thou shalt not give thyself up to carnal pleasures. IV. Thou shalt not lie. V. Thou shalt not drink wine or any intoxicating liquors. These precepts are all tolerably well regarded, save the fourth. The mendacity of the Burmese rivals that of the Persians and Arabs. A person who tells the truth is regarded as a good, simple character—in fact, a fool, who will never get on in the world. Among such a kindly-minded, affable people, one would expect an appreciative disposition, yet gratitude for a favor is almost unknown. There is no such phrase in the Burmese language as “I thank you.” Servility and humility, however, they possess in no unstinted measure. They not only consider themselves slaves before the king, adoring him upon their knees as if a god, but before any one who happens to be superior in possessions or age, a Burmese will always refer to himself in the third person singular, as “your slave.” The Siamese are equally obsequious. Thus a common man dares address a dignitary only when crouching abjectly before him and styling himself “your slave—a hair—a little beast.”

Burmese houses are built of teak-wood, palm-leaf, bamboo, rattan and grass, and are generally raised upon wooden posts four or five feet above the ground, to provide against the inundations of the rainy season, and also as a preservative from the fevers which are bred by the dampness of the climate. The villages often consist of but one long, broad street, running through perfect jungles of date, banana, palm or other tropical trees; and beneath and among these, nearly concealed from view, are the native huts, shops and monasteries.

In the fine art of tattooing the Burmese are excelled only by the New Zealanders. The operation usually commences in the seventh year, and is expensive, slow and painful. To allay the suffering, opium is often administered and deaths from an overdose of this drug or from inflammation, are not infrequent. The tattooing is usually performed from the waist to the knees. The upper part of the body is sparingly stained a vermilion tint, but the face is never tattooed. The figures, which are indelibly insinuated by a dark-blue pigment, are those of animals, birds, demons, genii, and cabalistic letters. They are first painted upon the surface of the body and then punctured by needles which have been dipped in the coloring matter. The women abjure tattooing, but stain their teeth black. This is always done upon their marriage, and when asked the reason of so singular a practice, the answer usually is, "What! should we have white teeth like a dog or monkey?"

The costume of the Burmese has a touch of Eden. Both sexes wear a short white cotton jacket, and the males a piece of gay colored silk or cloth about one yard in width and four yards in length, which is tied about the hips; while the women wear a nearly square piece of cloth or silk sufficiently large to wrap around the body, but secured merely by tucking the outer end within the other. The men wear red and yellow silk bandannas, in adjusting which they usually entwine a thick lock of hair; the women wear no head-covering. Both sexes leave their hair long; the men gather it in a bunch on the crown, and the women comb it straight from the forehead and tie it in a knot on the back of the head. The men seldom or never wear any hair upon their faces, unless it may be a very scanty mustache. Both sexes walk barefooted, though the women sometimes wear a sort of leathern shoe resembling the sandal of the Romans. The Burmese wear less jewelry than the Hindoos, though they take great delight in ear ornaments. The lobe of the ear is bored, and the perforation is frequently enlarged to the diameter of an inch.

Various articles are therein suspended, such as pieces of wood, jewels, rolls of solid silver or gold. When no auricular ornament is worn, these perforations are often used by the men as cigar-holders and by the women as bouquet-holders. In either case the spectacle is exceedingly ludicrous.

The diet of the Burmese is plain and wholesome, save among the lowest classes, who, I found, did not despise ants and beetles. Even lizards tickle their palates and snakes gratify their gastronomic nerves. As my hearers doubtless know, the general food of the nations of southern and eastern Asia is rice. With the Burmese, salted fish, rice and spices constitute the solid and substantial part of the meal, while betel-nut and the cheroot always make an enjoyable dessert. A condiment, for which there is very great demand, is made of preserved fish—fish which has arrived at that epicurean stage termed “high.” The betel-nut is extensively used, and most houses have near them trellises of the piper-betel plant, which is chewed with the nut. Smoking is universal and continual with both sexes and all ages. Cheroots of solid tobacco, but more often preparations covered with a green leaf wrapper, and sometimes of enormous size, are used. Burmese boys take to smoking even earlier than American youths. I have frequently seen a babe in arms sandwiching its natural occupation with pulls and puffs at the maternal cheroot!

The Burmese men are remarkably indolent. The industry of the women is involuntary; the men compelling them to do all the household work, at least the heaviest and most irksome part of it. The husbands, chatting and smoking, will sit where their wives are at work, or else lie stretched asleep upon the ground. If you give these natives just sufficient rice and fish-sauce to keep them from starvation, they will not work for even one dollar a day—a great sum for them. Deprive them of these luxuries and they will cheerfully work for a shilling a day—the customary rate of wages. However, like their neighbors, the Chinese, the men make excellent carpenters and blacksmiths. They also excel in cutting and polishing precious stones, in bell-casting, and in the manufacture of earthenware. Near Mandalay, the capital, stands the second largest bell of the world, being only surpassed in size by that at Moscow. It is twenty feet high, weighs ninety tons, and could easily contain twenty people. I have seen earthenware jars of their make which would contain 180 gallons. The women weave, upon odd-looking looms, silk cloths with beautiful colored stripes. But if sober work is not popular with

the Burmese, *play* is. Strange to say, their principal indoor game is chess. In general character it resembles our own favorite game, though the "pieces" are different in number and names. Cock-fighting is almost as great a passion as in the Philippine Islands, where nearly every man you meet in the towns will have his pet bird under his arm ready for a match at the shortest notice. The manly sports are also very popular. Indeed, the athletes of England or America can teach little to the boxers and wrestlers of Burmah. Finally, in order that you may estimate the degradation of this people, it becomes my painful duty to tell you that even the sagest and most accomplished Burmese knows nothing of that mysterious art which hangs inspiration upon the lips of every youngster in America—the art of whistling! That natural music of enlightened hearts is unknown in benighted Burmah.

Perhaps none of the customs of the Burmese are so peculiar as those connected with their courtship and marriage. Their mode of kissing is like that of the Polynesians. They apply the mouth and nose to the cheek, draw in the breath and say, "Give me a smell." When a young Burmese gentleman desires to marry, he does not, like Jacob, have to serve the father of his betrothed for seven years in hard labor, though, if the family approve of the match, he is obliged to reside in the house of his future father-in-law for three years. At the termination of that period he may consider himself married, and may take the young lady away to live with him. Thus he gets acquainted with his wife before he marries her. The first night after the marriage, instead of presenting congratulations, the neighbors collect together and throw stones and logs on to the roof of the house, and to avoid these delicate attentions, for which I could obtain no explanation, the greatest secrecy is always observed by bride and bridegroom. Sometimes, if the families are of very noble lineage, the following wedding ceremonial obtains: On the morning of the bridal day the bridegroom sends to the maiden three colored robes, three sashes, three pieces of white muslin, and such jewels, earrings and bracelets as his circumstances will admit. A feast is then prepared by the parents of the bride and formal contracts are executed, after which the two eat out of the same dish, and the bridegroom presents the bride with some pickled tea, which she accepts, returning the compliment, and this completes the nuptial rites. Polygamy is extensively practiced by this people, though but one or two women are recognized as wives.

A husband may punish his wife in the following instances : I. If

she is accustomed to drink wine. II. If she is careless of her domestic duties. III. If she encourages any gallant. IV. If she is fond of running about to other people's houses. V. If she habitually dawdles at the door or window. VI. If she is petulant and quarrelsome with her husband. In like manner, it is lawful for husbands to punish those wives who are very extravagant in dress or eating, those who show a disregard of modesty, or a too great curiosity, and those who by reason of their beauty or their dower are proud and overbearing. In these cases a husband must always at first bear with his wife patiently, and admonish her in the presence of others ; but if she does not amend, he may then punish her, and even beat her. If, after this, she still continue her evil habits, he may put her away, *volens volens*, dividing with her the property. As you will readily believe, the marriage knot is, under these conditions, rather loosely tied. The elsewhere often difficult task of severing the bonds of matrimony is in Burmah accomplished by this simple and beautiful process: If two persons become tired of each other's conjugal society they light two candles, shut up the house, sit down and wait quietly until the candles are burned out. The one whose light is first consumed, gets up at once and leaves the house forever, taking nothing but the clothes worn at the time. Perhaps it would not be too much to prophecy that, were this custom suddenly to obtain here, chandlers would become millionaires, and we should evolve a tallow and spermaceti aristocracy.

Having now given a somewhat general and hasty view of Burmah and the Burmese, I shall proceed to the narrative of my visit in that country. In April, 1871, I landed at Rangoon, the principal city in southern Burmah, situated on the Rangoon river, not far from the sea. From here I determined to make an excursion up the great Irrawaddy as far as Mandalay, the capital of Burmah, to pay my respects to his Majesty King Mounglon. One of a large flotilla of English steamers runs monthly to Bhamo, nearly a thousand miles from Rangoon, and there are weekly trips as far up as the capital. Having secured passage in one of these steamers, at noon on the second day from Rangoon we wheeled into the Irrawaddy, one of the largest of the many large rivers of India, and the great highway into the dominions of his golden-footed majesty the king of Burmah. The length of this celebrated river is probably about 1,400 miles, though its source has not yet been actually discovered.

One of the principal places at which we stopped was Paghan, a

city founded over 1,500 years ago, and containing the most interesting remains of antiquity to be found in Burmah. The ruins—some of which are believed to be more than 1,000 years old—extend for eight miles along the bank of the river, and two miles inland. They are of remarkably fine brick and plaster, built very massively, and nearly all are temples or pagodas, excepting a portion of brick wall and part of an old gateway. The temples are of all sizes, shapes and colors. Nearly a thousand are said to be still standing. They contain large rooms, having carved, gilded and painted ceilings, with Grecian and Gothic arches. In the temples are many images of Buddha, made of alabaster or brick and painted red; some are twenty feet in height. Paghan was abandoned over 500 years ago, but its temples are still held sacred, and are regularly visited, for here it is said the doctrines of the “new religion” of Buddha were first proclaimed in Burmah. Though this is doubtless true, still the various forms and contents of the pagodas and temples now remaining render it somewhat doubtful what people were formerly the builders or possessors of Paghan. Thus, besides the purely Buddhistic monuments—upon which I recognize characters almost identical with the inscriptions upon the great Buddhist temples of Java—some images bear remarkable resemblances to those of the Egyptian fetichism; and others are of a Brahminical or Hindu character; and the greater number, wonderful as it may seem, bespeak, though indirectly, a Christian origin, or rather they indicate elements of the Christian faith, which, as I shall soon show have evidently been incorporated with the doctrines of Buddhism. Many of the vaulted temples at Paghan take the forms of Greek crosses, after the manner of European cathedrals, and have steeples much resembling Romanist mitres. On one side of one of them is a figure of a priest, which is the exact counterpart of the statue of an English archbishop of the middle ages. He stands in a long gown, having over his head an umbrella which bears a remarkable resemblance to the circular covering of a cathedral pulpit. Near Paghan the bank of the river rises in a high sandstone bluff, into the almost inaccessible face of which are cut many small chambers or cells, the abode of ascetic priests. The Burmese, like the Hindus, deem it meritorious to mortify the flesh. In this matter of solitary seclusion we have perhaps an imitation of the monkish superstition which prevailed in European countries 500 years ago.

I am brought by these facts to speak of Buddhism, the great religion not only of Burmah but of all Farther India. For, whether

observed in the light of its diffusion—its followers embracing more than one-third of the population of the world, though not extending beyond the limits of Asia and the adjacent islands—or whether regarded in the exalted nature of its precepts, most of which are also found in our New Testament, Buddhism certainly claims the attention of every inquiring mind. Though, like other religions of the eastern world, it contains many revolting errors, absurd fables and contradictory statements, still its many capital maxims and its pure morals entitle it to be termed the most perfect system of belief ever invented by man. “It has no mythology of obscene and ferocious deities; no sanguinary or impure observances; no self-inflicted tortures; no tyrannizing priesthood; no confounding of right and wrong, by making certain iniquities laudable in worship.”

Historical students had for a long time entertained very diverse opinions concerning the origin of Buddhism. Some had thought that with the exception of Brahminism, it was the most ancient of Oriental religions. Others had supposed that it was the primitive faith of Hindostan. Some had fancied that Buddhism was eliminated from the gross pantheisms of Egypt and Greece. A few had even essayed to identify Buddha with the Hermes of the Egyptians. The Jesuits would persuade us that Buddhism is of Nestorian origin. Traces of this ancient faith are said to have been found in Swedish Lapland. Endeavors have been made to prove Buddha one and the same with the Woden of the Scandinavians. Stonehenge has been called a Buddhist temple. And the question has been raised whether there may not have been much of the marrow of this system of belief among the Celtic Druids. But, notwithstanding all these conjectures and speculations, Buddhism is now generally believed by oriental scholars to have originated in the fifth century, B. C., to have sprung up in Nepaul, a country lying contiguous to India on the north.

Probably nothing about Buddhism is so remarkable as the parallel its history presents to that of the Christian faith. “Both originated in members of royal races; both won their way by preaching and by the practice of manly virtues, honesty and truth; both firmly established themselves after 300 or 400 years, by becoming State religions; both gradually corrupted for about a thousand years until a revolution reconstructed them; both were driven from the lands of their birth, and are now professed by aliens and strangers to their founders.” But while all this is strictly true, and also that Buddha died 475 years before the birth of Christ, still you must remember

that it is well proven that the early growths of Christianity and Buddhism were entirely distinct from each other. Though the rock inscriptions and literature of India attest the originality and priority of Buddha's work, at the same time "the light of history shines clearly on the origin of Christianity, and places its perfect independence of extraneous suggestion beyond cavil." The French philosophers, you know, tried to find in the Buddhism of Thibet the origin of Christianity. And, indeed, the similarity between the Buddhist and Roman Catholic ceremonies has been noticed by many travelers and scholars. At the present day in Thibet, as I can myself testify, one finds almost all the ordinances and paraphernalia of the Romanists—"vows of celibacy, fasting, prayers for the dead, vespers, penance, rosaries, images (of the queen of heaven), holy water, relics, bells, candles, missals, incense, shaven crowns, monks, nuns and friars." Prinsep, the antiquarian, may possibly be right in assigning the origin of the legend of Prester John to the accounts which the early missionaries brought of the Tale Lama of Thibet—the pope of Asia—though I think many of the doctrines of Buddhism have been derived indirectly from Christianity, rather than the contrary. The Nestorians flying from the persecutions of Rome, spread their doctrines in the far regions of the east. From India Buddhism emigrated to Thibet, where these Christians already had ecclesiastical settlements, having found a fertile soil for the transplanting of a religion which, surrounded by all the splendor of idolatry, contained hardly any moral truth at variance with the spirit of Buddhism. Before this time Italian and French priests had visited the court of the Khans, charged with important missions from the pope. These padres carried with them church altars and ornaments, and used music, paintings, and ceremonials in their chapels to make a more favorable impression on the minds of the natives, just as their brethren do at the present day the world over. And the simple-minded natives then, as now, admired and gradually adopted the gorgeous rites of this religion. The splendor and pomp of the Buddhist Lamas were augmented by those of the Catholic monks. At first the Buddhist patriarchs who went to Thibet were dependent upon the civil power, and their archbishop stood in much the same relation to the rulers as did the mikado of a few years since to the tycoon of Japan. But afterwards the head of the religion received the sovereignty, amalgamating the pontifical and secular duties of the State, as also did their majesties in Japan. The coincidence of time and place, and the known fact that the sacred monarchy of

Grand Lamas did not exist before the twelfth century (A. D.), seem to demonstrate conclusively that the religion of Thibet as it is to-day is but an imperfect imitation of the Roman Catholic. And the lesser spurs of the same gigantic religion system—those trending to China, Japan and Farther India—either copied their theological institutes from Thibet, or which seems more probable, received them directly from Ceylon.

The similarity between the Buddhist and Catholic priesthood is also very striking. In Burmah they have a religious order with a distinct hierarchy. The archbishop resides at Mandalay, the capital, and has jurisdiction over all the priests and monasteries of the country. At court he takes precedence of the mandarins as the cardinals outrank the ministers in European countries. In the Burmese priests I was continually reminded of the monks of Europe in the middle ages. They do not marry, but live apart in monasteries. They own no property, but subsist entirely by the charity of the people. They wear a particular dress of a yellow color, shave the head and walk barefooted. They have the confessional, use the rosary and practice austerity and humility. Their time is taken up with religious observances and study. They wholly eschew the society of women, and should even the mother of a member of this ascetic brotherhood fall into a ditch, her son (if a priest) may not pull her out. If she be in real danger, and no other aid is at hand, the monk may offer her his robe or a stick to help her out, but at the same time he is strictly enjoined to preserve his sacerdotal purity by imagining he is only pulling out a log of wood! At any hour of the day, and indeed at almost any hour of the night, if in the neighborhood of a monastery, your tympanum and your tranquillity will be assailed by low, monotonous *interminable* chants. Do not be alarmed, however, it is only the priests repeating upon their beads what are known as the four considerations on the four things more immediately necessary to men, to wit: food, raiment, habitation and medicine. "I eat this rice, not to please my appetite, but to satisfy the wants of nature. I put on this habit, not for the sake of vanity, but to cover my nakedness. I live in this monastery, not for vain glory, but to be protected from the inclemency of the weather. I drink this medicine merely to recover my health, that I may with greater diligence attend to the duties of my profession." And these eminently proper and self-satisfying asseverations they are required to repeat 120 times every twenty-four hours! During life the greatest respect and deference are paid to their priests by the Bur-

mese, and after death, their bodies are embalmed and burned with rites which are curiously compounded of solemnity and buffoonery. The process of embalming is in most respects like that of the ancient Egyptians. The viscera having been removed, the body is first filled with spices. Next it is covered by a layer of wax, and over the wax is placed a layer of lac and bitumen, and the whole is then gilded. About a year afterwards the body, set in a coffin painted with various figures of death, is publicly burned upon a pile of bamboo. Sometimes the cremation is varied by the sensational act of blowing the body from a cannon, that it may be conveyed more quickly to heaven.

I wish I had time to give you some adequate idea of the sacred doctrines of Buddhism, but my limits will permit me to notice only some of the most peculiar. The sacred language of the Burmese is the Pali, as is the Sanskrit that of the Hindus. The Buddhist Scriptures are divided into three parts; The Instructions, the Discipline, and the Metaphysics. They embrace about one hundred volumes. An eminent Buddhist reformer once defined the duty of the different classes of Buddhists in the following manner:

“Men of the lowest order of mind must believe that there is a God, and that there is a future life, in which they will receive the reward or punishment of their actions and conduct in this life.

“Men of the middle degree of mental capacity must add to the above the knowledge that all things in this world are perishable; that imperfection is a pain and degradation, and that deliverance from existence is a deliverance from pain, and consequently, a final beatitude.

“Men of the third or highest order must believe, in further addition, that nothing exists, or will continue always, or cease absolutely, except through dependence on a casual connection or concatenation. So will they arrive at the true knowledge of God.”

If I hear you say, “What is this but Christianity, wanting only the name of Christ as its preacher and the Mosaic faith for its antecedent?” I reply: “There is another side to the picture; and it is proper that, having seen the good, you should also see the evil there is in this ancient oriental faith.”

A certain class of people in this country, in their eagerness to get clear of Christianity, are just now looking to and praising Buddhism as the *summum bonum* of life and the goal of all human wishes. But while admitting that it may be the best religion man has ever made for man, I do not by any means agree with those so-called modern

philosophers who would place it on the same level with Christianity ; for, when shown in its true colors, it is unsatisfying and soul-destroying in its tendencies. "At its best, Buddhism knows not a Creator, and Buddha is not a Saviour. Paradox though it may be, Buddhism is but a polytheistic atheism." It is founded on a false and rotten basis—that of personal merit, and not love and fear of God. Indeed, Buddhism has no actual God—annihilation is the aim and end of man. And so far as the great bulk of its devotees are concerned, it is the most gross and degrading idolatry. As fatalists the Buddhists rival the Stoics, the Turks and the Arabs. The belief in an invincible and inevitable necessity, a fixed, unalterable course of things, prevents an endeavor on their part to control the present or prepare for the future. Probably no nation in the world, excepting the Hindus, are so superstitious as the Burmese. They practice astrology and divination ; they believe in dreams and witches ; they wear talismans, and they use love philters.

Mandalay, the Burmese capital, is distant about 200 miles north from the ruins of Pagan, and is situated on a large plain three miles from the east bank of the Irrawaddy river. The city proper is a square—a mile on each side—and is surrounded by a lofty and thick brick wall having a notched parapet. At irregular intervals are turrets, and the gateways are surmounted by pyramidal towers. Before the wall is a broad and deep moat, filled with clear water and crossed by massive bridges to the city gates, of which there are three on each side. The latter are of enormous height and thickness, and are built of teak beams fastened together with huge iron bolts. Macadamized avenues about 100 feet in width lead from these and intersect the city at right angles. Between them are small irregular streets and by-paths. Along the sides of the larger thoroughfares run channels for carrying water, which is brought from the river in an aqueduct fifteen miles long. The houses of the capital are mostly frail structures of bamboo framework and mat covering, with grass or palmleaf-thatched roofs. They are raised upon posts some four or five feet from the ground—a precaution against inundations and dampness. In the principal streets many houses are built of brick, or large bricks are *nailed* to the sidings, and then the whole exterior is thickly plastered with mud. Some of the Chinese shops are two stories in height, and present a very neat appearance. Numbers of pagodas, temples and monasteries may be seen in all directions. Several Asiatic nations are represented in Mandalay, the population of which is about 100,000 ; but the trade of the city is mostly controlled by

the Chinese. The Europeans number but fourteen all told, some of them being officials of the English government, while a few are engaged in trade.

I was indebted to an influential Chinese merchant resident in Mandalay for my admittance to the palace and audience with the king of Burmah. The outer palace-walls are double, the one being thirty feet distant from the other; both are built of brick, and the inner incloses about seventy-five acres of ground. Near the gate at which we entered were some barracks and a guard-house, before which, standing in a row, were five of the king's soldiers. They wore brass hats, shaped somewhat like a broad-brimmed panama, and red coats of the British army pattern; but their legs and feet were bare. It is not always, indeed, that Burmese soldiers adopt even so much uniform as this; their profession can often be detected only by the tattooed marks on the back of their necks. The sole weapon of the guards was an immense iron cleaver. We walked into a large square, upon the right of which was a small pagoda, further on a bell tower, and in the left-hand corner a magazine and some buildings filled with light ordnance; next came the high court, and then the royal mint, while towering high above all rose the graceful spire of the magnificent hall of audience.

We passed around the high court—a large but not imposing building, painted red with gilt ornamental work—and were about to enter through another double line of walls, the inclosure which contains the palace buildings, when our attention was attracted by a regiment of native Burmese soldiers, who had been out at target practice. They marched by us in column, clothed in nothing but the waist cloth, and carrying huge rusty muskets closely resembling the historic blunderbuss of the sixteenth century. Judging from the appearance of these troops, I should say that a thoroughly equipped American soldier would prove a match for at least ten of them, and yet it has been said that the Burmese soldier fights well under most circumstances.

I visited one of the minor courts, and became much interested in the subject of Burmese laws and punishments. Perhaps, on the whole, the former are wise, and calculated to advance the interests of justice and morality, though they very often prove futile, owing to the tyranny and rapacity of the king, and the venality of many of his officers. And throughout Burmah I found the strangest minglings of truth and error, sense and nonsense. The laws are derived principally from the Hindu Institutes of Menu. As in some un-

mentionable countries not nearly so distant, justice in Burmah is a benefit too precious to be lavished upon everybody. The severest calamity that can befall a Burmese is to be "put into justice." Criminal cases are generally tried before the governors of the towns. If the litigants are rich, the lawsuit is apt to be a long and costly one, and a decision is often given in favor of him who pays the highest. How different is all this in our more favored land! Trial by ordeal is still extant in Burmah. Sometimes it is by trying which of the parties can remain longest beneath the surface of water; again, whoever can hold the finger longest in hot water or melted lead gains the cause. False swearing is particularly obnoxious to the Burmese citizen. A witness in court takes a fearful oath, which is made binding by chewing pickled tea after the ceremony.

Punishments for grave crimes are very cruel; for murder and treason, crucifixion, decapitation, burning alive and drowning; for lesser offenses, the stocks, labor in chains, maiming, branding, imprisonment and selling into slavery. Corporal punishment by flogging is quite common. "The bamboo is here, as in China, the invariable instrument of castigation, and the fear of the cane—that schoolboy terror of the western world—may be said to hold all Eastern Asia in awe. Even the prime minister himself is liable to its infliction." The Burmese have also a system of forfeits and fines as punishments. Thus, whoever steals a horse must restore two; whoever steals an ox must restore fifteen; whoever steals a buffalo must restore thirty; whoever steals a pig or a goat must restore fifty; whoever steals a young goose or a fowl must restore one hundred; whoever steals a man must restore ten, or four if he only conceals him.

Like most semi-civilized people, the Burmese attach little value to human life. If a person is accidentally killed by another, reparation is made by paying the price of his or her body according to the following scale of value: A new-born male infant, two dollars and fifty cents; a female infant, one dollar and seventy-five cents; a boy, six dollars and twenty-five cents; a girl, four dollars and thirty-seven and one-half cents; a young man, eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents; a young woman, twenty dollars and sixty-two and one-half cents! Though all these are ridiculously low valuations, it should be favorably remarked that the greatest intrinsic worth is attached to their young women by the Burmese. It is hardly necessary that even casual reference should be made to the fact that the elephant

is valued at fifty dollars, or more than double that of the most highly appraised human being.

After remaining in the court-room about twenty minutes, an officer came with a message that the king was ready to give audience, and so, preceded by two of the grand ministers, we approached the *mhan-gaw*, or crystal palace, passing through still another gate in a low brick wall. Soon after we reached a long flight of stone stairs, where we were requested to halt and remove our shoes. We then ascended to another office, and our arrival being announced to his majesty, in a few moments we were summoned to a small pillared portico, open on two sides. At one end there was a golden door, which led to another chamber. At the other a large green curtain extended from the ceiling to a flat dais about four feet in height. In this screen was a small opening extending down to the dais, upon which were lying a red velvet cushion and a pair of silver-mounted opera-glasses. The roof of the portico was supported by immense pillars, grouped around the bases of which were the ever-present symbols of royalty—gold silk umbrellas. About half a dozen princes were in the audience chamber, among them the heir-apparent, an intelligent and handsome young man, plainly dressed, with the exception of a pair of immense cluster diamond earrings. Our presents were displayed before us, placed on little wooden stands. The natives were all prostrating themselves flat upon their stomachs, with their noses nearly touching the carpets, and their eyes cast down in a most abject and servile manner.

Soon we heard two or three muffled drum-taps, and then the king appeared and quietly laid himself down, reclining against the velvet cushion, and only partially facing the assemblage. At the same time one of his queens entered and placed a golden spittoon, a betel-box, an urn of water, and a drinking cup on the floor before him. All Burmese officials have a set of these articles, which are borne after them by their servants, and from their shape and material, both of which are regulated by law, one may determine their rank. The king was a short, stout gentleman, with a large head, closely set eyes, and short, thick neck. He appeared to be about fifty-five years of age. His dress was very plain and simple, consisting merely of a white linen jacket and a silk cloth worn around the hips and thighs. There were no ornaments in his ears, though their lobes contained holes nearly an inch in diameter, which did not give a very amiable expression to his countenance. The king first took up his opera-glass (though we were not more than twenty

feet distant), and surveyed us in a very grave and leisurely manner, ending with a flourish which seemed to signify, "Now, then, what do you want?" But first the royal secretary read aloud our names, business, and a catalogue of the presents which were placed before us.

His majesty then began the conversation through the prime minister, my Chinese companion serving as interpreter. It seems I had the honor to be the first American presented at the court of Burmah, and that the king, in his astuteness, graciously thought me a spy, or at least that I was visiting Burmah for political purposes, and consequently had some influence with, as well as instructions from, the government at home. It was in vain I protested that I was a simple traveler, visiting different countries for the purpose of studying their people and productions, and that I had journeyed about 12,000 miles more especially to pay my respects to the king of Burmah, and to see the wonderful white elephant, about which I had read so much in my own country. These complimentary avowals were to no purpose, for it was quite evident his majesty thought politics were surely my main object. After the usual questions concerning my age, business, residence and travels, the king said he wished me to convey to my government the sentiment that he had a great partiality for Americans, and wished them to come over and colonize in his dominions. In reply, I promised to make his wishes known to the proper American authorities, but this did not seem to be sufficient, for he answered that he would retain me in Mandalay while I wrote, and until word came from America. At this I demurred, of course, when his majesty said that if I would remain he would give me a house, living, and as many Burmese wives as I wished (a rather tempting offer, for the women of the upper classes are pretty, intelligent and modest), and furthermore, that he would make my fortune. In the flush of the moment, I felt myself fast becoming a Burmese, with a saving faith in Buddha, and the royal umbrella as my natural inheritance. His majesty wished to make also a commercial treaty with America, and my services would be indispensable. Thus were alluring nets spread about my ingenuous soul! Still, I was not then prepared to enter the king's service; the idea was too novel, the change—from democracy and woman suffrage to despotism and white elephants—too amazing. "I must have time to consider his majesty's gracious offers," said I to the interpreter. "You will never have a better chance," was returned from the king. Seeing me still reluctant,

his majesty condescendingly offered to make me "a great man"—to give me high rank among his own nobles and princes. I found myself waxing preternaturally filial and patriotic, and answered that my duty was first to my parents and next to my own country, and that I would return to the latter and consult with the former, and if they were willing I should be most happy to accept his magnificent and gracious terms. He replied "it might then be too late." And there the matter dropped, and the conversation was changed to other topics, though the king was evidently not a little vexed at my obstinacy, and doubtless thought me mad or certainly very foolish. One of the princes then presented some petitions, which were referred to the proper minister; some routine business was transacted, a valuable present was brought my unworthy self, and then the audience was terminated by the king's abrupt leaving.

One of the queens or concubines (he has four of the former and about a hundred of the latter), who, though out of sight, had, during the audience, been fanning the king with a gorgeous brush of peacock's feathers, now took a peep at us, of course exhibiting herself at the same time. Such a beautiful creature I had rarely, if ever, looked upon before, and perchance never shall see her like again. She was one of the veritable "houris of paradise," an Oriental pearl, a Lalla-Rookh siren, fed on buttered rose-leaves, and of indescribable loveliness and symmetry. I will not attempt a description; but the king's liberal offers came at once to mind, and I felt what a great sacrifice it would be to return to my native land, and refuse—nay, almost spurn—rank, wealth and beauty under the peacock bauner and golden umbrella of His Majesty of Burmah.

Not always is the king dressed so plainly as on this occasion. Sometimes he wears ornaments of gold set with precious stones, the total weight of which is over fifty pounds. His crown consists of a lofty gold pyramid of filigree work, shaped like a Burmese pagoda studded with immense diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds. Over each shoulder he wears a golden wing like a fairy.

The audience lasted over an hour. The king seemed to have very respectable ideas of America, and a high appreciation of the enterprise and industry of her people. Perhaps he wished Americans to settle in Burmah as a sort of political offset to the English, whose power and influence—now owning two-thirds of the ancient kingdom of Burmah—are naturally very great; but I think his main idea was simply to obtain from the United States a commercial treaty advantageous to himself.

As regards the events of the king's reign, much might be said of blame and something, also, of praise. The government is a despotism modeled somewhat after that of China, the king being the father of the state, the mandarins the fathers of the provinces over which they are placed, and the magistrates fathers of the subordinate departments in which they preside. Among many other of the royal titles I noticed that of "Lord of Power of Life and Death." The king alone decides upon peace or war, and if the latter, the whole male population between seventeen and sixty years of age must serve. The entire country belongs to the crown. As with the emperor of China, and, in fact, with all eastern rulers, so with the king of Burmah: vanity and pride are his characteristic traits. The self-styled "Son of Heaven" at Peking, who believes that western nations are simply remote dependencies of the great "Middle kingdom," and who considers foreign ministers as vassals sent to render homage and to reside at his court as hostages, is quite matched by the "Glorious Sovereign of Land and Sea" at Mandalay. The king of Burmah, however, in his government is assisted, and doubtless influenced, by four public and four private counselors, and four ministers of the interior. The Council of State, comprising the four principal ministers, are the executive officers of the government.

Possibly a fellow-feeling ought to make us wondrous kind to Burmah when we reflect that throughout the entire kingdom bribery and corruption reign supreme. Burmese revenue is obtained partly from house taxes, which are collected in money, and partly from taxes on the crops, of which five per cent. in kind are taken. The king appropriates most of the revenue to his own uses, many of his ministers receiving no salary at all. His majesty's method of paying his debts is somewhat peculiar. He first buys goods of merchants at a low price, and then serves them out at a high price as pay to his troops or followers, who are afterwards compelled to sell them in the bazaars at a great sacrifice. The present king, however, has shown some appreciation of the advantages of western civilization. He offers good inducements to European mechanics and engineers to establish themselves in Mandalay, and has succeeded in bringing his country into telegraphic communication with India and Europe.

After we had descended the palace stairs we put on our shoes (which had been removed when we entered, agreeably to Burmese etiquette), and went to a neighboring building to see that very cele-

brated animal called the white elephant. The beast proved to be a male of medium size, with white eyes and a forehead and ears spotted white, appearing as if they had been rubbed with pumice-stone or sandpaper, but the remainder of the body was *black as coal*. Elephants of this character, although we should call them black, are styled by the Burmese *white* elephants. The one in question was a vicious brute, chained by the fore-legs in the centre of a large shed, and was surrounded with the "adjuncts of royalty"—gold and white silk umbrellas, an embroidered velvet canopy above, and some bundles of silver-tipped spears in the corners of the room.

In Burmah and Laos the elephant is found in immense herds. He is very easily tamed, and is used with some effect in war, though his services are still more valuable in domestic labors. At Maulmain, in the south-eastern part of Burmah, there are many large timber-yards, in which the usefulness, power, sagacity and docility of the elephant are most wonderfully illustrated. There these uncouth monsters are employed in drawing, stacking and shifting the immense teak logs—some of them weighing as much as two tons. A log that forty coolies could scarcely move, the elephant will quietly lift upon his tusks, and holding it there with his proboscis, will carry it to whatever part of the yard he may be directed by his driver. They will also—using trunk, feet and tusks—pile the huge timbers as evenly and correctly as one could wish. What surprised me the most was to see the elephant select and draw out particular timbers from the center of an indiscriminate heap of more than a hundred, simply at the command of the native attendant. The drivers, who always ride upon the necks of the elephants, direct these huge beasts by means of spoken orders, and by pressure of the feet on their necks or sometimes by the use of an iron goad. It usually requires a year, or a year and a-half, to teach them the lumber business, and when thoroughly taught they are worth from \$250 upwards, according to their abilities. I saw one, a venerable old fellow nearly ten feet in height, for which the owner said he had refused an offer of \$1,500.

Pure white albino elephants are rarely seen, but occasionally one with a yellowish-white skin—spotted more frequently than a solid color—with pink iris and scarlet rim around the eyes, is found in the forests of the central parts of Farther India. As a rule, white are quite as physically perfect, healthy and long-lived as black elephants under like conditions, whether in the cities of Mandalay, Bangkok or Panompin, or in the forests of Laos. They are of ordinary size

and shape, and are captured of both sexes. Their color is a simple freak of nature, and not necessarily hereditary. They are held to be sacred by all the Indo-Chinese nations excepting the Annamese. They are revered as gods while living, and their deaths are regarded as national calamities. This extraordinary reverence for them is a traditional superstition and of most ancient date. We see something of the appreciation in which the elephant, both black and white, is held by these people in the titles and offices of their rulers and great men. Thus the king of Cambodia is styled "First Cousin of the White Elephant;" the prime minister of Siam, "General of the Elephants;" the foreign minister of Annam, "Mandarin of Elephants," while the kings of Burmah and Siam covet the pompous titles of "Lord of the Celestial Elephant" and "Master of Many White Elephants." The grand lama of Thibet is said also to glory in the possession of one of these sacred monsters.

The white elephant has been happily termed the "Apis of the Buddhists." Its sanctity is due in part to the known Buddhistic reverence for white quadrupeds. Both the Burmese and Siamese possess albino monkeys, which are honored with special attention; and Darwin might find much comfort in the belief and saying of the Siamese, that "the monkey is a man—not very handsome, to be sure, but no matter, he is no less our brother." The fact that the white elephant is found only in Buddhist countries, and that it is so rare, probably gave rise to the belief that it must be the temporary abode of some mighty Buddha in his progress to perfection, and that in thus possessing this singular animal, they may also enjoy the presence of Deity and its attendant blessings.

White elephants have been the cause of many a war, and their possession is more an object of envy than the conquest of territory or the transitory glories of the battle-field. Once the king of Siam possessed seven of these sacred beasts, and the king of Burmah asked that two should be given him, which modest request being denied, the Burmese invaded Siam with a great army of men, horses and war elephants, marched upon the capital and captured four of the white monsters, instead of the two originally demanded. In the money market a white elephant is almost beyond price. One hundred thousand dollars would not represent its pecuniary value. Sir John Bowring, on the occasion of negotiating a treaty between England and Siam, some twenty years since, received many valuable presents from the king; but finally, his majesty placed in his hands a golden box, locked with a golden key, and containing (he informed

him) a gift far more valuable than all the rest, and that was a few hairs of the white elephant! In Burmah, a subject who may find one of these famous albinos, receives a present of a thousand dollars, is raised to the rank of Mandarin, and exempted thenceforth from all taxes. The repute in which they are held by the court and people, and the great anxiety there is to obtain them sometimes causes the destruction of much property. Thus, on one occasion, when a report was brought concerning the projected capture of a white elephant which had been discovered, and the transport of which to the capital over the cultivated country would destroy 10,000 baskets of rice, the king is said still to have ordered the hunt, exclaiming, "What signifies the destruction of 10,000 baskets of rice in comparison with the possession of a white elephant!"

It is quite true that, at the present day, the white elephant is worshiped by the lower classes. But by the king and chiefs it is venerated and valued not so much for its divine character—being the abode of a transmigrating Buddha—as because it is believed to bring prosperity to the country in peace and good fortune in war. It is part of the royal regalia, and the more there are of them the more grand and powerful the State is supposed to be. Ministers and a cabinet are appointed to wait upon the white elephant. A large endowment of land, frequently one of the finest districts in the kingdom, is set apart for its maintenance. When sick the king's physicians attend it, and priests pray for its cure. It is not only treated like a prince of the blood by the nobility, but is said to be the second dignitary of state, outranking the heir apparent. This is not entirely correct. They really do, however, take rank immediately after the royal princes. The white elephant is the national emblem of nearly all the states of Farther India. One may see it upon flags, seals, decorations, medals and moneys. As is the cross among Christians, or the crescent among Moslems, so is the white elephant among the Buddhists.

To be compared to one of these unique beasts is regarded by the Indo-Chinese as a compliment of the highest possible character. One of the Siamese ambassadors who visited England a few years ago, thus speaks of the English potentate: "One cannot but be struck with the aspect of the august queen of England, or fail to observe that she must be of pure descent from a race of goodly and warlike kings and rulers of the earth, in that her eyes, complexion, and above all, her bearing, are those of *a beautiful and majestic white elephant.*" The feelings of her most gracious majesty upon

receiving such a delicate manifestation of oriental flattery may be more easily imagined than described.

There is a report that a white elephant is now on the way to this country for exhibition, whether by Mr. Barnum or not I cannot guess ; but I may assure you that no such animated abode of holy Buddha is in the Oriental market, nor would it ever be allowed peaceably to leave either of the august courts of Lhassa, Mandalay or Bangkok.

In a pavilion not far distant from the abode of the white elephant is the royal library. Some of the books are made of sheets of ivory, silver or copper, richly ornamented. There are others of which the leaves are covered with a hard black lacquer, upon which the words are emblazoned in letters of gold. The king's books are contained in large gilded chests placed in rows against the walls of a great square room. The volumes are all numbered, and the titles are emblazoned on the covers of the chests.

The vernacular tongue of the Burmese has neither declension nor conjugation, and is very difficult for Europeans or Americans to learn. The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Judson, the well-known Baptist missionaries, studied two years before making much, if any, progress in it. It is written from left to right, with no division between the words, and with letters most of which are circles or parts of circles. The alphabet contains forty-four letters. The Burmese write generally upon pieces of a peculiar kind of black paper, and with thick soapstone pencils. The priests are the teachers, and the monasteries are the national schools. Education is so widely diffused that there are few of the common people even who cannot read and write.

The greater part of Burmese literature is metrical. It consists of treatises upon theological and legal themes in the Pali dialect; legends of the different Buddhas, songs, epic poems, romances, histories; works on medicine, music and painting; and books of astrology, cosmography and astronomy in both the Pali and Burmese languages. A popular form of literature, which I often saw the school-boys reading, was a sort of religious or historical story. These usually contain a moral, and seem well adapted to the comprehension of so simple minded a people. And here I might mention, in support of Solomon's asseveration that there is no new thing under the sun, that a number of Burmese fables have been found the very same as those narrated by the great and good French fabulist, La Fontaine.

Each monastery contains a collection of books. These generally consist of bundles of strips of palm leaf. Each strip is two or three inches wide and two feet long, and the bundle is placed between two thin boards, which are either sealed or tied with a tape. The writing covers both sides, and is done with a sharp iron instrument like the classic stylus, the engraving being afterwards blackened with ink. Sometimes these books are illustrated. I have one in my possession, in which spaces are left on many of the leaves for colored figures of Buddha and for gilded ornamental patterns.

In remeasuring the 700 miles of water communication between Mandalay and Rangoon, nothing of special importance occurred. The River Irrawaddy is navigable as far as Bhamo, 300 miles above the capital, or just 1,000 miles from its mouth. Once a month a steamer traverses this entire distance. On an island in the upper part of the river there is a Buddhist monastery, where are some large tame fish, which come to the surface of the water at the cry of "Tit-tit-tit," and are regularly fed by the monks. The species is allied to that of the dog-fish, without scales, from three to five feet in length, and apparently consisting of head and mouth. They are exceedingly voracious, and beg by the suggestive process of opening their huge jaws. They are so thoroughly domesticated as to freely permit any one to stroke them on the back.

The scenery of the Irrawaddy from Mandalay to Bhamo is very fine, the river passing through narrow mountain gorges, fertile lands, and by picturesque villages, pagodas and temples. Not far below Bhamo is an especially striking and beautiful defile about fifteen miles in length. The river here is quite narrow, while the banks on both sides rise to a height of five or six hundred feet, and are covered with grand old forests, which cast their dark shadows upon the smooth water. A huge rock—called "Monkey Castle," from the number of monkeys that hang about it—rises perpendicularly 800 feet above the surface of the river, and is a noticeable feature of this wonderful gorge. As the steamer slowly tugs along the view constantly changes. Here upon a hill-top one sees a pagoda; there upon a plain a little village, or yonder, upon the water, a few fishermen in a boat. The scene is not so much calculated to please and astonish the eye by wild sublimity and rude precipices as by graceful hills, glass-like water and soft shadows.

This part of Burmah is much the richest in mineral and vegetable productions. There are found iron, coal, tin, copper, lead, antimony, salt, and gold and silver. More than 2,000,000 dollars'

worth of gold and silver alone have been dug from the mines near the frontiers of China. Sulphur, nitre, marble and amber are also found. The hills are covered with valuable teak and oak. The soil being remarkably fertile, the valleys and plains offer, with moderate cultivation, millet, maize, wheat, cotton, tobacco and the sugar-cane. In the beds of the rivulets are found the topaz, sapphire, amethyst and other gems. The famous ruby mines are about seventy miles from Mandalay. They produce the finest stones in the world. Rubies have been found weighing 150 grains, and sapphires as much as 4,000 grains.

I should like to say something of the Christian missionary work in Burmah, but fear your patience is already exhausted. Missions have been established in this country for more than 150 years. The Bible, as you probably know, was first translated into Burmese by our revered countryman Judson, about forty years ago. He and his excellent wife were the forerunners of many energetic propagandists since sent out by the American Baptist Mission. Owing to the susceptibility and native kindness of the Burmese character, the missionaries have met with great success in their labors during the past twenty years.

Burmah has a number of harbors which are surpassed by few in the world. A railway between Rangoon and Prome, 180 miles, is now projected. Many common roads, reaching rich agricultural districts, are also laid out—the rivers heretofore being the only commercial routes. The articles of export from Burmah are raw cotton, precious minerals and stones, ornamental feathers, teak timber, terra japonica, stick lac, beeswax and ivory. Many of the rich products of our southern States, as tobacco, sugar-cane and cotton, are indigenous to Burmah.

At present Burmah is in a strange state of transition; civilization and barbarism are most oddly mixed. Not here, as in Japan, has European imitation become the rule. Burmah is too secluded and too difficult of access. Still much is to be expected from a country where there is scarcely a male who cannot both read and write, and where the people, possessing none of the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of the Mohammedans of India, or the Ancestral Worshipers of China, show they are not only willing but also eager to assimilate the arts and sciences of western nations. The enlightening influence of the British is incalculable. Under their rule—direct or indirect—the material prosperity of Burmah is assured. The march of improvement has already begun, and though it may be

slower than in Japan, it will not for that reason be less safe and sure.

The mere fact that two of the kings of Farther India, contrary to ancient custom, left their respective countries a few years ago and traveled, the one to Java and India, and the other to Hong Kong and Peking, is of immense significance. Even so limited a view of the outer world cannot fail to have a great influence upon the future careers of these potentates. It will more dispose their subjects to external reciprocities and internal improvements, and stir up a spirit of rivalry for equal advancement with their neighbors.

Evidently the Burmese are now seeking with eagerness what they have so long strenuously resisted—an entrance into the community of nations, a participation in the commerce of the world. The results achieved by the introduction of western enterprise and culture are curious and interesting. Canals are in contemplation; railways have been surveyed, and the work upon them begun; steamers have long been plying on the large rivers of the kingdom; the electric telegraph has connected the principal cities since 1870; a Burmese newspaper has recently been started by the king at Mandalay, and primary and high schools are giving the training of civilization to the young receptive Burman intellect.

These and other evidences of material prosperity and anxiety for progress, one may now see in Burmah. Already the thinker foresees a rich harvest in improved government and laws, greater religious toleration, broader education, and purer morals. When the present remains of barbarism shall have been swept away, there will be erected in this isolated tropic a unique but substantial civilization—more picturesque, indeed, than those with which we are familiar, yet as full of important social problems as the civilizations of colder climes.